

Andrew Jackson to John Coffee, December 13, 1813, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

TO JOHN COFFEE.

Fort Strother, December 13, 1813

D'r Genl: On this morning one quarter after three I closed the letter you will receive by Mr Bird, and half after 4 oclock I recd your letter of the 10th. together with your confidential letter, both read and considered, I hasten to answer—that I regret extremely the tardiness of the contractors, and still more the want of Patriotism of the Troops in the field. I see nothing that can be done but a bold stroke and do what we can, and if supplies cannot be had to abandon the campaign for the present, first notifying Genl Pinckney of our situation and the necessity of a retrograde. but I still hope from the exertions of Messhrs. Pope and Brahan with the supply McGee has on hand of Bread stuffs at Rosses we will receive ample supplies and be able to compleat a campaign so gloriously begun—notwithstanding all the mutinous dispositions displayed by the fire side patriotts, who forget their patriotism when the[y] enter the field and find danger in front. I expect 300 Barrells of flower and meal down the river in the course of the day. This with what can be sent up in our rear will give us a supply that will Justify a movement, and crush the enemy at once. They greater part of the Holston troops say their time is up in a few days. I must make them fight one Battle before they get out of service, and I have called on Genl Cocke to know how many men he has in the field of the 1500 men ordered from the detached militia agreeable to the orders of the secratary of war, these are in service for six months. I have also wrote to the Governor requiring his ideas when the detached militia times are out and requesting that their places may be supplied by other requisitions and up before the others time expire—and upon the whole I can see no other alternative from the orders of Genl Pinckney, the situation

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of the Troops, but to move on, and destroy those that are collected in front. our laurels will fade if we stop here—our state will be disgraced, and our boasted patriotism appear in *its true colours* , unless we now exert ourselves, and I can say in the language of the sacred writ, “as for myself and my house we are determined to serve the lord;” and without disguise as far as bodily strength will permit, to realise the expectation of my country from any and all my declarations. I find nothing but a bold stroke will do. we must push these discontents to the last point of their patriotism, give them one fight, lessen the enemies force, and then let them go, and if our government will not furnish us men, we are not to blame, but as for you and myself we must be the last to leave the field. you will therefore press the contractors, for vigorous exertions. come up as soon as you can and I will move without delay. There is plenty of flower and meal in East Tennessee to supply an army of 20,000 men as Judge white Major Minett and Genl Cocke and White inform me and one active agent by giving a liberal price, from Eight to ten dollars a barrel for flower delivered at Rosses, or at fort deposit, and half a dollar a Bushel for corn meal sifted at the mills, and one dollar pr bushel in barrels deliver[ed] at Rosses or fort deposit. when this is the fact what excuse can be for contractors not supplying us. why has not Pope and Brahan, sent on an active agent to purches and push the supplies down the river. if you are with them when you receive this do my Dr sir press them on this subject. I shall push on an active agent to make purchases for the Goverment to Holston and as soon as this is done (which will be as soon as I can obtain one in whom confidence can be reposed) I will advise them. but they ought not to rely on this. I want to scorch old McGee who had every thing in his power and has starved us. come on and bring with you all the bread stuff for the support of your Brigade you conveniently can and Join me as soon as possible. I am sincerely yrs etc

8 oclock at night I am advised that Genl Cockes force here 1450, times are out on the 23rd. 29th. and 1st of January and that they too are determined to go home the moment their time is out. what a situation If I advance, and get into the midst of the Indians, liable to be deserted, by Half my force, without a garrison or numbers to protect my main body, or convoys of provisions. you will therefore halt at Fort Deposit or some place where you can

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get supplies for your horses, and be in readiness for my order. I will consult the officers tomorrow, and order you accordingly. The Volunteers, are depositting some of their arms here and will march back like heroes in the morning. Yrs with respect